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# CHAPTER 1

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*Wetlands near Shaktoolik*

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Summary of Purpose

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The Northwest Area Plan describes how the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will manage state land, including uplands, tide, shore, and submerged land (see Map 1-1) in Northwest Alaska. The plan determines land classifications, land disposal locations, remote cabin areas,

land selections, areas open to mineral entry, and guidelines for leases and permits on state lands. The plan does not make decisions for federal, Native corporation, or private lands.

### How this Document is Organized

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**Chapter 1** describes the purpose of the plan, the planning area, and the process used to develop the plan. It includes a summary of how the plan will be implemented and a summary of the process for modifying the plan after it is adopted. It also documents the decisions made for major proposals between the alternatives and the draft plan, and between the draft and final plan.

**Chapter 2** presents policies that guide state land management throughout the planning area. These policies are generally consistent for all state lands covered by area plans. Some policies have been modified to reflect conditions unique to the Northwest Area.

**Chapter 3** describes the plan's land use designations and management intent. The section on each of the seven management units includes background information, a statement of management intent, the guidelines specific to the

management unit, and tables of major resource values and land use designations.

**Chapter 4** discusses specific actions needed to implement the plan. These actions include proposed land selections, classifications, mineral orders, municipal entitlements, and procedures for plan amendment. This chapter also includes recommendations for further study, field staff, cooperative agreements, and additional access. It also describes the public trust doctrine.

**Appendices** offer a variety of support materials for information presented in the plan: glossary, organization names and addresses, references, criteria used for plan designations, existing permits and leases, community population, acreages for designations, mineral closure orders, list of agencies, coastal plan maps, and an index.

## Why Plan for State Land?

State land in the Northwest planning area provides fish, wildlife, water, firewood, minerals, materials, transportation routes, and places to live and recreate. There are many different ideas about how this land should be used, and some of the uses may conflict. However, if the land is managed carefully, many different uses can occur throughout the planning area.

The planning process is a way to openly review resource information and public concerns before making long-range decisions about land management. It addresses and minimizes potential use conflicts. Through planning, the people who use this land can help choose the ways the land should be managed. The planning process lets

the public know what choices were made and why. Decisions are made on a comprehensive basis, rather than case by case. This provides consistency and consideration of all resources and uses for the whole planning area.

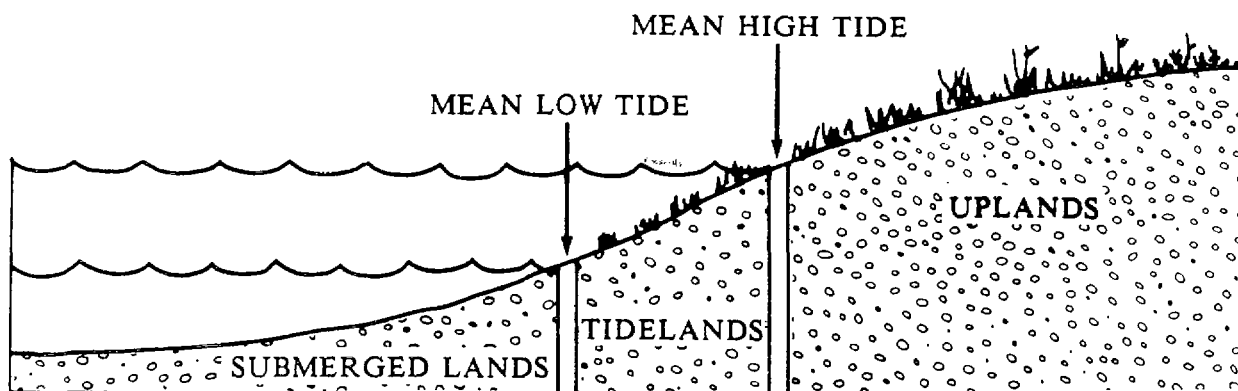
Title 38 of the Alaska Statutes requires preparation of land use plans for state land. Once a plan is adopted, permits, leases, land sales, cooperative agreements, and other DNR land management actions will be based on that plan. With a plan, state review processes for these actions become more efficient for both the government and the public.

## Description of the Planning Area

**Land Status.** The Northwest Planning Area includes the Lisburne Peninsula up to Icy Cape, Kotzebue Sound and the Kobuk River Valley, the Seward Peninsula, and Norton Sound. Approximately one-fourth of the land within this area, or about 11 million acres of uplands and about 5 million acres of tide, shore and submerged lands, has been selected by or is owned by the state.

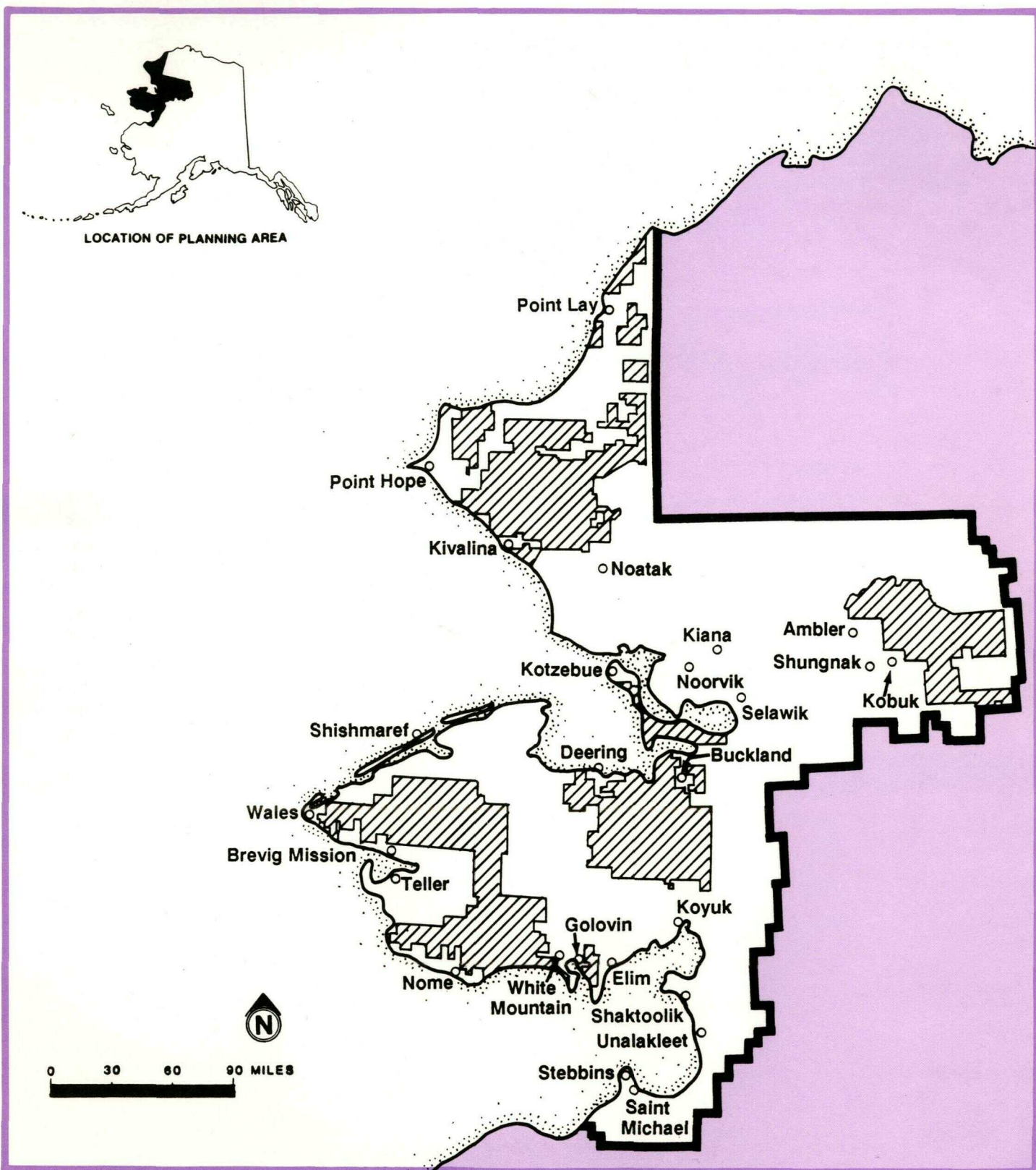
Federal land within the planning area is administered by the Bureau of Land Management

or lies within the following conservation units: Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Kobuk Valley National Park, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge, and portions of the Noatak National Preserve, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) regional and village corporations own or have selected over 10.9 million acres within the planning area. In addition, about



**Figure 1-1.** Tidelands include the land between mean high and mean low tide. Submerged lands are seaward of mean low tide. The state owns almost all tidelands in the Northwest Area Plan and owns the submerged lands out three miles from shore. In this plan, the word "tidelands" is used to include both tidelands and submerged lands.

## THE NORTHWEST PLANNING AREA



Detailed land status is not shown because of the complex land ownership pattern and the small scale of the map. Some private lands and Native-selected land exists within the areas shown. More detailed land ownership maps are shown in Chapter 3 and are available at the DNR office.



280,000 acres in 2,300 parcels have been selected or patented under federal land conveyance programs, including Native allotments, mineral patents, and homesites. The planning area does not include state-owned tide or submerged lands around islands more than 3 miles offshore.

**Physiography.** The planning area has many diverse physiographic regions. The arctic coastal plain, Brooks Range foothills, and De Long Mountains make up most of the northern portion. The Baird Mountains and lowlands along the Noatak, Kobuk, Selawik, and Buckland rivers cover the central portion. The southern portion includes the Seward Peninsula, the Yukon-Kuskokwim coastal lowlands of lower Norton Sound, and the Nulato Hills. The Kobuk, Noatak, and Selawik Rivers are the three major river systems within the region that drain into Kotzebue Sound. Other large rivers include the Kukpuk, Buckland, Kuzitrin, Niukluk, Koyuk, and Unalakleet rivers.

The Chukchi Sea coast, from Icy Cape to Cape Lisburne, is predominantly composed of barrier islands; from Cape Lisburne to Cape Thompson, the sea coast is dominated by the Point Hope spit, bounded on the north and south by high sea cliffs. From Cape Thompson to Cape Krusenstern, the coast is primarily erosional, interspersed with a few lagoons and short barrier beaches, and has narrow beaches and low cliffs. Kotzebue Sound, from Cape Krusenstern to Cape Espenberg, is a shallow, sediment-filled embayment.

The north coast of the Seward Peninsula, from Cape Espenberg to Cape Prince of Wales, consists of lagoons and barrier islands. No major rivers drain into the sea in this region, although, smaller rivers drain into the Arctic and Shishmaref lagoons. The coast of Norton Sound from

Cape Prince of Wales to St. Michael has narrow beaches with steep terrain.

**Communities.** The 26 communities within the Northwest Planning Area have a total population of about 14,000 (see Appendix F). Most of the communities have a subsistence economy or a mixed subsistence-cash economy. Seasonal jobs in government, construction, fisheries, transportation, reindeer herding, and tourism provide most cash income. To a lesser extent, cottage crafts (such as ivory carvings, jewelry, basketmaking, and skin-sewn garments) also provide some income. A high percentage of residents supplement cash income with subsistence activities. Hunting, fishing, berry picking, plant gathering, and timber harvesting provide food, fuel, clothing, and building materials for residents.

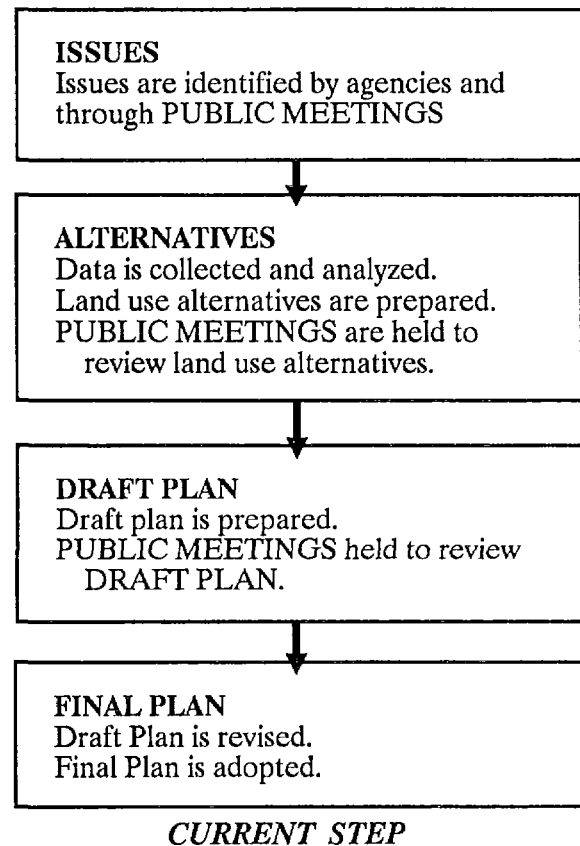
Extended families and kinship systems are the cornerstone of the mixed subsistence-cash economy and allow for the efficient production and distribution of store-bought and subsistence goods. Though the regional economy is partly based on development and extraction of local resources, the entire planning region is expected to continue its dependency on a subsistence economy for the next 20 years.

**Access.** Access to the planning area is by commercial flights to the regional centers of Kotzebue, Barrow, and Nome and by small commuter flights within the area. Local residents commonly use an extensive winter trail system for travel to neighboring villages and important hunting, fishing, and trapping areas. In the summer, boats are used along the coast and major rivers, and within lagoon areas.

## How Was the Plan Developed?

The Northwest Area Plan is the product of three and a half years of work by the planning team, interest groups, and the general public. The planning team consists of 18 representatives from state agencies, coastal programs, local governments, and ANCSA corporations. (For a listing of agencies and organizations represented on the team, see page i and ii.) Over 75 public meetings and workshops have been held throughout the planning area and in Anchorage and Fairbanks to gather public comments and ideas (see Figure 1-2).

**Figure 1-2 The Planning Process**



## Public Participation

Private citizens, private organizations, local councils, and other local, state, and federal agencies took part in the process by attending public meetings, by participating in working groups and planning team meetings on specific issues, and by submitting written and oral comments. The general public was informed of planning activities through periodic newsletters. Three rounds of public meetings were held before the plan was completed. The first series of 26 public meetings was held in October and November of 1985 to identify general issues and concerns. Relevant resource data was collected and

analyzed. Land-use alternatives and management proposals were developed from these issues and data. A brochure explaining these alternatives and proposals was mailed to over 1,000 people in March of 1987. Twenty-six public meetings were held to solicit comments on the plan alternatives in March, April, and May of 1987. Comments on the alternatives were used to prepare the draft plan. A final round of public meetings was conducted in the fall of 1988 to collect comments on the draft plan. Summaries of public comments are available from DNR (see Appendix C).

## Summary of Plan Implementation

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The policies, management guidelines, and land-use designations of the Northwest Area Plan will be implemented through administrative actions such as land sales, leases, permits, land selections and relinquishments, interagency memoranda of agreement, cooperative agreements with other landowners, research, classification orders, and mineral closing orders. In addition, DNR and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (DF&G) may make recommendations to the state legisla-

ture on legislative designations or changes in legislation consistent with the plan.

Land classification orders and mineral closing orders have been prepared for state land in the planning area. These orders are the formal record of the primary uses allowed on state lands and are recorded on state status plats. The final plan serves as the final finding for the state land classifications and mineral orders included in the plan.

## Summary of How to Change the Plan

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Economic and social conditions in Alaska and in the Northwest Planning Area will change, and the plan must be flexible enough to change with them. Three ways to modify the plan are amendments, minor changes, and special exceptions. The Northwest Area Plan will be reviewed every five years (approximately) to determine if revisions are required. In addition to the regularly scheduled review of the full plan, specific modifications may be made any time that conditions warrant. Substantive changes to the plan can be made by amendment when approved by

the Commissioner of DNR, with public review and consultation with affected agencies. A minor change to the plan that does not change the basic intent of the plan, such as correcting a technical error, does not require public review. Special exceptions to the plan can occur when compliance is impossible or impractical. A request for a special exception must follow procedures in Chapter 4, *Procedures for Plan Modification and Amendment*.

## Statewide Goals

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This plan is designed to balance competing interests in state lands in the Northwest Area and to contribute to DNR's statewide goals in a manner appropriate to the resources, economy, and communities of the area. The six statewide goals are

**1. Economic Development.** Provide jobs and income through the management of state land and resources to support a vital, self-sustaining local and statewide economy. Subsistence activities in Northwest Alaska are an important part of the local and regional economy.

**2. Public Use.** Provide diverse opportunities for public use of state land, including such uses as hunting, fishing, recreation, and firewood collection.

**3. Private Land.** Provide opportunities for private ownership of state land.

**4. Quality of Life.** Maintain or enhance the quality of the natural environment and cultural resources, and the character of existing communities.

**5. Fiscal Costs.** Minimize the cost of providing necessary government services and facilities, such as state land management programs, schools, and transportation facilities.

**6. Public Safety.** Protect public safety, for example through avoiding development in areas of natural hazards.

The policies, land use designations, management guidelines, and implementation actions in this plan describe the way resources in the Northwest

Area will be managed to contribute to these goals.

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## Summary of Changes to Major Plan Proposals in the Alternatives and Draft Plan

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The main provisions of the plan and the reasons for decisions are summarized in the remainder of this chapter. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are the detailed descriptions of these actions.

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### Subsistence

From the first planning team meeting for the Northwest Area Plan, subsistence concerns were identified as one of the most important issues the plan should address. Subsequent public meetings and comments on alternatives emphasized these concerns. Many concerns expressed at public meetings were fishing and hunting allocation issues, which cannot be addressed by DNR. The boards of Fisheries and Game determine allocation for harvest, and DF&G manages the fish and wildlife species. DNR manages the habitat and the access to the habitat.

A cooperative subsistence mapping project was undertaken by DNR and DF&G's Subsistence Division for many communities in the planning area. The maps showed the areas of harvest for each fish and wildlife species, by community. A background resource report on subsistence was prepared for the plan, based on the DF&G Habitat Management Guides section on subsistence, with input from a special working group. Information from the subsistence maps and report was used throughout the plan.

The plan has addressed subsistence concerns in several significant ways. The plan recognizes subsistence needs by retaining over 99 percent of state lands in public ownership and managing for multiple uses, including subsistence. The plan also requires that subsistence activities be addressed when managing this state land for multiple uses. A special set of guidelines for *Subsistence Activities and Traditional Uses* is found in Chapter 2 of the plan, page 2-43. These and other plan policies assure that development

activities will occur with a minimum of impact to the mixed cash-subsistence economy of the region.

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### Grazing

Reindeer herding is one of the oldest, most continuous, and most successful forms of agriculture in Northwest Alaska. It is a major economic activity on most of the Seward Peninsula. Reineer rangeland is multiple use land -- it supports fish and game populations, wild berries and other edible plants, mineral exploration and extraction, and recreational use.

Early in the planning process, it was recognized that existing DNR grazing guidelines did not adequately address the Northwest Alaska situation, especially the practice of grazing reindeer on land split among several ownerships. New management guidelines were written to provide opportunities for continued grazing of reindeer and other livestock on state land while affording this state land proper protection for other uses. These guidelines call for multiple use management of state land with grazing potential. The guidelines include protection of public access and public use of this land, protection of important wildlife habitat, and establishing mechanisms for developing grazing operations plans and issuing grazing permits on a longer-term basis.

The complex land ownership pattern that exists in Northwest Alaska necessitates a coordinated application process for grazing authorizations. Grazing operations plans should become an essential component of grazing authorizations. Plans will be coordinated by the Alaska Soil and Water Conservation District through a cooperative effort between the applicant (herder) and the affected land owners. Technical assistance will be provided by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. The grazing operations plans should



improve management of reindeer herding, and the coordinated application process should simplify the management requirements of the herder and landowners.

## Land Sales

The Alaska Constitution and statutes require that some state land be offered for sale. Statewide public interest in acquiring land through state disposal programs is strong. The Northwest Area Plan determines which lands will be offered for private ownership in the area over the next 20 years.

During the alternatives stage, up to 1,900 acres in six areas were proposed to be offered for private ownership over the next 20 years. Of these six areas, three were along the road system north of Nome and three were on tributaries of the upper Kobuk River. The alternatives noted that offerings within the Northwest Arctic Borough would be deferred for five years or until the borough completes its comprehensive plan, whichever comes first.

The three land-sale areas identified in the alternatives for the upper Kobuk River Valley were Mauneluk River, Kollioksak Lake, and Pah River. Public comment from local residents overwhelmingly opposed land offerings in the Kobuk River Valley. The greatest concern expressed was the conflict of land sales with the current and long-established subsistence uses in these areas. Encouraging settlement in an area already feeling the impacts from incoming recreation users was also a great concern. DF&G initially expressed strong opposition to the Pah River land-sale area and documented that all three proposed land-sale areas were within joint-use areas for the communities of Ambler, Shungnak, and Kobuk. The NANA Regional Corporation and Northwest Arctic Borough adamantly opposed land sales within their region. Support from outside the region was low. The planning team amended the draft plan proposal by dropping the most contested land sale area (Pah River) and noted that the borough can select the remaining sale areas as part of its municipal entitlement. If the land sale areas were selected and conveyed to the borough, management of that land would be decided by borough policies and plans. The plan

defers land sales in the Kobuk River area for five years or until the borough's comprehensive plan is complete, whichever comes first.

Three land-sale areas identified in the alternatives for the Seward Peninsula were near Bunker Hill, Grand Central River, and Pilgrim River. Public and agency comments opposed the Bunker Hill area because of high wildlife habitat values, reindeer grazing, recreation uses, and subsistence use of the area. Similarly, concerns were strongly expressed about disposing lands along Pilgrim River. In response to these concerns, the planning team dropped the Bunker Hill area and modified the Pilgrim River area by identifying a staking setback area 1/4-mile from the river. To provide a reasonable level of offering on the Peninsula, the team considered an additional site along the Nome-Council road and another near Sinuk River. However, after field inspections and a workshop with local representatives, these two sites were dropped. The public review draft proposed enlarging the Grand Central land-sale area, adding an area near Christian Creek south of Grand Central. The draft plan also proposed adding an area near Golden Gate Creek north of the Pilgrim land-sale area, and offering the modified Pilgrim River area.

During the draft plan review for the proposed Seward Peninsula land sales, comments showed that Nome residents strongly favored more land sales in the Nome area, but felt that the Grand Central area was too important for recreation and wildlife habitat to be offered for sale. Most people in support of sales opposed the subdivision offering, and preferred a more dispersed offering. Fewer people opposed any of the other proposed land sales on the Seward Peninsula, but several comments stressed that the Pilgrim River and Golden Gate areas were important wildlife habitat.

In response to these comments, land sale areas on the Seward Peninsula have been changed. The northeast portion of the proposed Grand Central sale area in the Grand Central River Valley was dropped. The remainder of the Grand Central and Christian Creek sale areas were joined into a dispersed offering of 65 homesteads. Ten homestead parcels will be offered in the Pilgrim area, and 15 parcels will be offered in the Golden Gate area. Each parcel will be up to

ten acres in size, giving a total of 900 acres for sale on the Seward Peninsula.

In addition to the usual public and agency review, the plan requires that Bering Straits Coastal Resource Service Area, Bering Straits Native Corporation, and the Division of Mining be consulted

about the design of the revised Seward Peninsula land sales.

The following table summarizes the areas proposed for land sales during the alternatives stage, the public review draft, and the final plan.

**Table 1.1 Land Disposal Areas in the Alternatives, Draft, and Final Plan**

Subregion/Unit	NET ACREAGE*		
	Alternatives	Public Review Draft	Final Plan
<b>Kobuk River/Unit 3</b>			
Kollioksak Lake	100-200	100-200	100-200
Mauneluk River	75-150	75-150	75-150
Pah River	50-150	0	0
Subtotal	225-500	175-350	175-350
<b>Seward Peninsula/Unit 5</b>			
Bunker Hill	200-400	0	0
Grand Central River	200-400	300	0
Christian Creek	0	100	650
Pilgrim River	200-600	400	100
Golden Gate Creek	0	100	150
Subtotal	600-1400	900	900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>825-1900</b>	<b>1075-1250</b>	<b>1075-1250</b>

\*Net acreage is the amount of land that will actually be transferred to private ownership.

## Leases and Permits

Public comments on alternatives indicated a reluctance to support leases and permits on state land, mainly because of concerns that issuing leases and permits would increase pressure on subsistence resources. Many people wanted local residents consulted before issuing permits in traditional use areas.

DNR may issue permits for some temporary uses of state land, such as trapping cabins and commercial tent camps. DNR may also issue leases for more permanent uses of state land, such as lodges or communication sites. The Northwest Area Plan will continue to allow leases and permits in most of the planning area. Leases for commercial recreation facilities will not be allowed in certain habitat areas (see *Public and Commercial Recreation* guidelines, page 2-22).

Trapping cabin construction permits should not be issued if the cabin conflicts with existing trapping and subsistence activities. Each request will be reviewed for compliance with the plan's management guidelines and policies.

Under plan guidelines for *Coordination and Public Notice*, page 2-5, community and public notice will be given for all trapping cabin construction permits, exclusive use permits, reindeer grazing permits, and authorizations requiring notice under A.S. 38.05.945, such as land sales, remote cabins, and oil and gas lease sales. The plan lists organizations to be notified, including city offices, IRA and traditional councils, and ANCSA corporations. Guidelines for *Subsistence Activities and Traditional Uses*, page 2-43, offer additional measures to avoid conflicting resource uses.

## Minerals

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Currently, almost all state land in the region is open to mineral entry. Many areas in Northwest Alaska were selected by the state for their mineral potential. The Northwest Area Plan closes certain areas to new mineral entry where mining would conflict with other resource values and the impacts cannot be mitigated.

The alternatives proposed leaving most state land open to new mineral entry, using guidelines to minimize impacts on resources and uses. Certain especially sensitive areas, such as seabird rookeries and sheefish spawning areas, would be protected through mineral closures. Support for the proposal was mixed: strongest support came from outside the plan area; within the plan area, Seward Peninsula respondents favored the proposal more than did Northwest Arctic Borough residents. Comments opposing the proposal (43 percent of respondents) indicated widespread concern over the potential impact of mining activities on spawning areas, water quality, fish and wildlife resources, and ultimately, on the subsistence lifestyle of area residents.

Two areas of concern were identified in the draft plan for possible closure to new mineral entry: important seabird rookeries along the coast and sheefish spawning areas on the upper Kobuk River. Most public comment supported these closures. The plan closes these site-specific areas: within a quarter-mile radius of 13 seabird

rookeries on state uplands, and on tidelands with high mineral or coal values; and at 7 sheefish spawning areas and adjacent state lands within 200 feet on either side of ordinary high water. Lands in the five areas offered for disposal (see **Land Sales** in this chapter) will be closed to mineral entry prior to sale.

Besides mineral closure, other measures will mitigate potential mining impacts on fish, wildlife, habitat, water quality, and subsistence uses. These are outlined in the areawide land management policies in Chapter 2. *Fish and Wildlife Habitat* guidelines (page 2-6) mitigate impacts on anadromous stream mouths and seabird colonies, and address the impacts of mining. *Stream Corridors and Instream Flow* guidelines (page 2-39) for habitat and water quality, and *Subsurface Resources* guidelines (page 2-45) for environmental quality and cultural values also address the impacts of mining activity.

## National Guard Training Areas

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The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) is interested in using state land in the Northwest Area for a National Guard military training area. The plan alternatives asked for opinion on two areas for military training. At the public meetings, four additional areas were proposed. Public comments generally opposed all proposals, although mixed support existed in some communities, particularly on the Seward Peninsula. The planning team did not recommend any military training areas. DNR has advised the DMVA of this information, and has requested that they hold meetings in any affected communities to review their resultant proposal. Proposals for military training areas on state land will require an authorization from DNR that will be in compliance with Northwest Area Plan policies and consistent with appropriate coastal plan policies.

## Oil and Gas

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In the Northwest Area, oil and gas resources have a low to moderate potential. The Northwest Area Plan addresses general concerns about balancing oil and gas development activities with other uses. The oil and gas proposal

in the alternatives--that all state lands could be available for oil and gas leasing under the five-year leasing process and that lease sales will be coordinated with approved coastal management plans--received support from over half of the respondents. Opponents expressed concern about coordination of oil and gas lease sales with approved coastal management plans. Other comments expressed concern about protecting subsistence resources.

Management policies of the Northwest Area Plan will be consistent with the approved coastal management plans for the area. State oil and gas lease sales in the area will be closely coordinated with these plans to assure compliance. The public will be informed of lease sale plans and will have the opportunity to comment on them through the Division of Oil and Gas public outreach program. Through the outreach program and numerous guidelines established in the plan, impacts on subsistence resources will be mitigated.

### Public-Use Cabins

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The state's public-use cabin program allows people to rent a cabin for hunting, fishing, and general recreational use. The Northwest Area Plan considered areas for public-use cabins.

Five areas--Noatak River, Wulik River, Kobuk River, Lake Minakokosa, and Niukluk River--were proposed for public-use cabins in the alternatives because of their high profile as recreation areas. Most comments opposed recommending these areas for public-use cabins. The comments did express a preference for campsites over cabins, but voiced concern that encouraging more use in the area would create more competition for the resources.

The planning team dropped the recommendations for public-use cabins, but retained those areas in public ownership and reflected their high recreation values in the management intent for specific management units.

### Remote Cabins

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The state can issue 25-year permits to individuals to build cabins on scattered sites in remote areas. The Northwest Area Plan decides what areas in

the planning area will be open for remote cabin permits and how many remote cabins will be allowed in each area.

The alternatives proposed opening five areas to remote cabin permits: Noatak River, Ambler River, Lake Minakokosa, Norutak Lake, and the lower Mauneluk River. No areas were identified on the Seward Peninsula because of the difficulty in finding suitable areas of state land more than the required ten miles from road access. Public comments from the Northwest Arctic Borough adamantly opposed offering remote cabins because of the conflicts with subsistence activities of Noatak, Kobuk, Ambler, and Shungnak.

In response to concerns in the Northwest Arctic Borough, the planning team dropped the remote cabin areas in the highest use areas--Noatak River, Ambler River, and Mauneluk River--for the draft plan. An area was added at Reed River to sustain a reasonable range of opportunity for cabin sites while minimizing the likelihood of conflict with other uses. The locations and number of remote cabins proposed in the draft plan were Lake Minakokosa (2 cabins), Norutak Lake (3 cabins), and Reed River (2 cabins). Additionally, these offerings for remote cabin permits would be deferred for five years, or until the borough's comprehensive plan is complete, whichever comes first.

Initially, most of the comments from the Seward Peninsula, particularly from Nome, supported the remote cabin program and questioned the lack of areas identified on the Seward Peninsula. The draft plan proposed adding four areas: Upper Koyuk River (2 cabins), Casadepaga River (19 cabins), Sinuk River (2 cabins), and Upper Bonanza and Eldorado Rivers (2 cabins).

Most of the comments about remote cabins proposed in the draft plan opposed any remote cabins in the planning area. People felt that the cabins would increase actions that harm subsistence resources and reindeer grazing. Some felt that access to the cabins would be a problem. Another concern was that it would be hard for local residents to get a remote cabin site. In the Nome area, where demand for land is greater, people felt that permits should be issued for more than 25 years. Comments strongly opposed cabins in the Casadepaga River area and the Eldorado/Bonanza areas, but some were in favor

of cabins in the Sinuk River and Koyuk River areas.

The planning team decided to drop the Eldorado/Bonanza River and Casadepaga River remote cabin areas, and to increase the Sinuk River area to 4 cabins and the Koyuk River area to 10 cabins. In response to overwhelming op-

position to cabin offerings in the Northwest Arctic Borough, the remote cabin areas also were dropped at Lake Minakokosa, Norutak Lake, and Reed River. Table 1.2 shows the areas proposed for remote cabins during the alternatives stage, the public review draft plan, and the final plan.

**Table 1.2 Remote Cabin Areas in the Alternatives, Draft, and Final Plan**

Subregion/Unit	Alternatives *	NUMBER OF CABINS	
		Public Review Draft	Final Plan
Kobuk River Valley			
Unit 2 - Noatak River	some	none	none
Unit 3 - Ambler River	some	none	none
Lake Minakokosa	some	2	none
Norutak Lake	some	3	none
Mauneluk River	some	none	none
Reed River	none	2	none
Subtotal	some	7	none
Seward Peninsula			
Unit 5 - Casadepaga River	none	19	none
Bonanza/El Dorado	none	2	none
Sinuk River	none	2	4
Unit 6 - Upper Koyuk River	none	2	10
Subtotal	none	25	14
TOTAL	some	32	14

\*Proposed remote cabins at low density, no numbers specified.

## **Municipal Entitlement**

The Municipal Entitlement Act (AS 29.65) establishes land classification categories that determine a municipality's general grant land entitlement. The Northwest Area Plan classifies state land within the planning area boundaries

(see Chapter 4, *Land Use Classifications*). When a municipality incorporates under state law, it may select land within its boundaries that, except for classification, otherwise meets the definition of vacant, unappropriated, unreserved land under AS 29.65. Settlement of municipal entit-

lement is a high priority for DNR, and the current classifications of the plan will not preclude considering parcels of land for reclassification and transfer to a municipality. See the discussion in Chapter 4, *Municipal Entitlement*, for further details.

The Northwest Arctic Borough was established in 1986, one year after the beginning of the Northwest Area Plan. Two major issues arose as a result of the creation of the new borough: municipal entitlements and local planning powers. The borough was concerned that the Northwest Area Plan not restrict its land selection options. Additionally, legislation in 1987 allowed new entitlement for the North Slope Borough. To facilitate land transfer to the boroughs, DNR will defer classification of preliminary areas of interest for borough selection until the borough selections are formally submitted. Following receipt of the selections, land not selected by the boroughs will be classified according to the plan designations in the management units. Designations are listed in Chapter 4, *Land Use Classifications*. Before any transfer to municipal ownership, the land will be reviewed for state interests.

The Northwest Arctic Borough is beginning work on its comprehensive plan. When the comprehensive plan is completed and adopted, DNR will comply with the provisions of that plan. The issue of particular concern to the borough is settlement activity that may increase competition for resources or create additional land use conflicts. DNR will defer offerings of land sales for five years, or until the borough's comprehensive plan is complete, whichever comes first.

## Coastal Management Programs

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The Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) was established by the legislature in 1977, under Alaska Statute 46.40. Regulations implementing the program are found in the Alaska Administrative Code (6 AAC 50, 6 AAC 80, and 6 AAC 85). The ACMP regulations include standards that apply to all land uses in the coastal zone. All permits, leases, and sales of state land within the coastal zone must be consistent with those standards in the state program.

The policies of the Northwest Area Plan for state land within the coastal zone must be consistent with state coastal management standards and with any approved district programs. Four coastal districts exist within the Northwest Planning Area. The North Slope Borough and the City of Nome have received approval from both the Alaska Coastal Policy Council (CPC) and the federal Office of Coastal Resource Management (OCRM). Although not yet approved by the federal OCRM, the Northwest Arctic Borough and Bering Straits Coastal Resource Service Area (CRSA) Coastal Management Plans have been approved by the state's CPC, and articulate state policy. State agencies have been instructed to honor these plans in making decisions.

DNR has worked with planning team representatives from each coastal district to insure that Northwest Area Plan policies are consistent with coastal plan policies. Additionally, districts with approved programs review most of DNR's decisions within their boundaries to determine their consistency with the district plan. In addition, if proposed activities on state land outside their boundaries would significantly affect resources within the district, then DNR must notify the district of the proposed activities.